



# THE TOWER

MAY 2016

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TITUSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

## Letter from Reverend David Oyler

Greetings in Christ,

In this 'in between' time it continues to be an honor to partner with you as you seek to share Good News in the Titusville community. As many of you recall, I am serving on a part time basis as the Session and interim search committee continue to seek the person God is calling to serve with you on a full time interim basis. Those are not easy conversations as your leaders seek to discern a person who has the following qualifications for this interim position. He/she must have: a deep devotion to Christ as Lord and Savior; experience relating to people across a wide range of ages, theology and perspective; effective administrator; preaching capabilities; inspirational; and the ability to look at the developmental skills that normally are discussed in an interim time of pastoral leadership. On top of that, he/she must be in a position to move to Titusville (or be within commuting distance). It is a 'tall' order but one that the Session is devoted to pursuing.

In the meantime, and at the same time, it is good as a congregation to engage in thoughtful reflection on where the Spirit of God is leading us. It is not enough to wait until a called/installed pastor arrives so a congregation can get back to normal (whatever normal might look like). Rather, it is most helpful to 'be the church now' even as we look to the future.

With that thought in mind I would like for you to reflect with me on the purpose of life as a follower of Jesus. In 1643 the English House of Commons determined to clarify the government and liturgy of the Church of England. A total of 151 people – some politicians and some theologians – participated in a total of 1,163 sessions across a period of six years. (Talk about your long committee meeting!!!) In the 1640s civil war also broke out in England. After long discussion, debate and disagreement a document emerged called the 'Westminster Confession of Faith.'

It is likely that many of you are familiar with the first question asked in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It reads like this: 'Question: 'What is the chief end of man? Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.' With apologies for the gender specific language, I believe that question is a crucial one for understanding who we are. And it has dramatic implications for the ways in which you and I live our life faithfully in relationship to God. The lives we live are not about **our** comfort or the building of **our** lives in ways in which we believe the Kingdom of God should be built. That first question shifts the focus away from ourselves and toward God. As we take it to heart we cannot help but ask ourselves these questions: 1. Do **I** glorify God by my actions and demeanor? 2. Do **I** enjoy God?

Is our faith a faith that offers glory to God? Am I able to shift the focus away from the created one (myself) and lift up the Creator (God)? Can I let God's personality shine through me with openness and sensitivity and a lack of judgment of others? In the second half of that answer the questions continue: Do I **enjoy** God? Does my faith in God make me smile more? What attitudes do I bring to my conversation within my faith community as well as beyond my faith community? Is there a winsomeness to my faith that is appealing to others? Or does my style of faith 'put people off'? Is there sensitivity, thoughtfulness and humility woven into my faith so that the joy of the Lord is evident?

Of course the questions could go on and on but you get the idea. We are always in the business of learning and re-claiming this faith in an awesome God who invites us to **glorify** and **enjoy** God. It is a tall order! It is also an opportunity to be led by the Spirit into the preferred and promised future that God desires.

May the journey continue!

Glorifying and enjoying God with you,  
Short term, part time Pastor David Oyler

## **Office Hours for Pastor David Oyler**

Pastor Oyler desires to be available as much as possible even as he has full time responsibilities to Lake Erie Presbytery. Thank you for learning flexibility in this 'in between' time. During the month of May Pastor Oyler intends to be in the church office at the following times:

Monday, May 2, morning and afternoon  
Wednesday, May 4, morning and afternoon  
Tuesday, May 10, morning and afternoon  
Thursday, May 12, afternoon and evening  
Monday, May 16, morning and afternoon  
Friday, May 20, afternoon and evening  
Saturday, May 21, morning and afternoon  
Tuesday, May 24, morning and afternoon  
Thursday, May 26, morning and afternoon

In addition to these times, Pastor Oyler also intends to preach each of the five Sundays in the month of May. Come join us for worship. And invite a friend!

Of course, these times are subject to change. We are always in the process of learning what it means to be a faith community together. Part of that 'learning' currently involves adaptability around the availability of your pastor. Thank you for learning adaptability!

## **Delightful, Insightful Growth through the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Continues**

You and I are always learning new things, gaining new perspectives, seeking to understand so that we might function more effectively and faithfully in this world as followers of Christ.

Part of our growth as a faith community currently focuses on the rich insight the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center is bringing to our attention. Growth is a process.

This month your Session and Lombard invite you to another growth opportunity on Saturday May 21. We will meet in Schiede Hall from 8:30 to 1:30. The previous evening, May 20, the Lombard leadership team will have met with your Session to discuss the insights that have surfaced about our congregation. Saturday will include continuing discussion and growth about the dynamic ways in which we relate to each other as a faith community early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Yes, I realize we are all busy people! And, yes, I realize we can all come up with a dozen spring chores that need to be done around our homes on a Saturday in May! But these hours spent together will bear good fruit in discovering and discerning God's preferred and promised future in our congregation. Place it on your calendar! If you have a heart for the continuing journey toward vitality in this congregation we need you here! Learn something more with other believers! Join with us!

## **Session News**

Your Session met on April 25 to engage in important conversation as we engage the future as a congregation. Included in their discussions:

- spent time Dwelling in the Word on Luke 10:1-12.
- received, on transfer of faith from the First Presbyterian Church, Franklin, the memberships of Penny and Gary Gustafson and Courtney DeDionisio.
- engaged in important dialogue on how and where the Spirit is leading in our work together as a faith community.
- discussed the continuing insights being learned through the work of Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. The next conversation with Lombard will be Saturday, May 21, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. All members of the church are warmly encouraged to participate.
- were updated on the continuing diligent work of Interim Search Committee.
- heard an outstanding report from Eryn Lavery on the youth ministries during this past year.
- received updates from all the committees on their work to enhance the ministry of our congregation.

Planned to meet again with Lombard on Friday, May 20, at 7 p.m. and then, once again, on Monday, May 23, at 7 p.m. for the regular monthly Session meeting.

## Special Request in Celebrating Pentecost

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On Sunday, May 15, Pentecost Sunday, the Worship Committee is asking that everyone wear the color red to Church. The color red is associated with the Holy Spirit, and Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason all are to wear red on Sunday, May 15, to church.

Also some a fun facts of Pentecost are: it is the second most important feast in the Church's year (ranking after Easter). It celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. It has been celebrated for many centuries, having been celebrated early enough to be mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (20:16) and St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (16:8). It coincides with the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which took place 50 days after the Passover and which celebrated the sealing of the Old Covenant on Mount Sinai.

## Upcoming Meetings

Christian Education - Thursday, May 12, 6 p.m., Conference Room

PW Board Meeting- Monday, May 23, 4 p.m., Conference Room

Session Meeting – Monday, May 23, 7 p.m., Conference Room

## Church Mission Statement

### First Presbyterian Church

A Christian community, welcomes all people  
and equips them to proclaim, witness, and teach  
the good news of Jesus Christ  
through worship, prayer, and caring service.

## Christian Education

### Craft Items Needed for Children's Worship

Each Sunday our children do arts and crafts during the time the adults are worshipping. We are currently asking for donations of art supplies so the children can learn about recycling. The supplies that we are looking for are old CD's, margarine containers, cotton balls, old newspapers and magazines, plastic frozen juice containers with lids, small coffee cans with lids, papers plates (unused), egg cartons, popsicle sticks, yarn, T.P. rolls, ribbon, beads, glue and glue sticks.

Drop your donations off in the bins located at each entryway (marked "crafts"). Our hope is to have these items by June 5. If you have any questions, please see Pandi Ford.

### Another Sunday School Class Option

'How do we live in a pre-Christendom culture? What does Christian love look like where wide differences exist? Where do my rights intersect, or diverge, from others within my faith community?' These questions are the sort of questions the church was addressing in first century Corinth! And they are the exact same questions that post-Christendom Christians are thinking about in 21<sup>st</sup> century North America. Are you intrigued? If so, come join in the rich conversation! 9:45 on Sunday mornings. Pastor's Study. Led by David Oyler. Together we are growing God's Church!

### Middle School and Senior High Youth Group Report for 2015/2016 by Eryn Lavery

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. -Matthew 28:19-20*

"Belonging before believing"

The goal this past year for the youth ministries at First Presbyterian has been to disciple our youth in the faith in addition to providing a safe, courageous space for those young people who are exploring a relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

*Basic Components of Youth Group Gatherings*

Each week our middle and high school students would gather together and, after a time of prayer in the prayer room, participate in activities centered around:

- Gospel Study
- Mission
- Fellowship
- Prayer
- Service

Gospel Study: We read and discussed various gospel lessons, considering both their historical context and contemporary application. A private donor purchased new NIV Teen Study Bibles, increasing our Bible total to 12 and allowing for each student to have their Bible during study. Bible stories and their meanings were explored, with a favorite being Jesus cursing a fig tree outside Jerusalem!

Prayer: New this year was the prayer room upstairs in the Education building. Our weekly ritual was to gather in the prayer room, sit in a circle with blankets and pillows, and talk through each individual's prayer requests and/or praises to share. At the beginning of the year, adult youth leaders led these intercessory prayers, but as the year progressed students began taking turns leading the group in prayer and praise.

Mission: Our youth undertook several mission projects throughout the year, including a fall canned goods scavenger hunt for the Food Pantry, making Trick or Treat bags to distribute on Halloween, Christmas caroling to church members, delivering fruit baskets and other goods for Associated Charities at Christmas time, gathering and delivering paper goods for St. James House for Lenten Love Your Neighbor mission, and on a cold evening, baking and distributing warm chocolate chip cookies to every house on the church's block.

Service: The youth participated in a foot-washing ritual (washing one another's feet), vacuumed, dusted, and wiped down the upper wing of Education building and office, created paper ornaments and flowers for the elementary students' prayers, rotated reading Scripture from the pulpit in Sunday morning services, and corresponded with elementary Sunday School children using faith dialogue journals.

Fellowship: Some nights were just plain fun. We played games in the basement gym, gathered at Perkins or McDonald's for hot chocolate and chats, or played games like Pictionary, and Apples to Apples. During the games, students practiced using "put-ups" instead of put-downs during the games. ("Put-ups" are genuine affirmations of another, such as "You draw really well," or "Wow great job!") Throughout, our focus was on building community within the youth group, strengthening our bonds for better service and mission in the name of Christ.

The last gathering for regular MS/HS youth groups will be a cookout on **Sunday, May 1, from 5-8:00** at the Lavery house. Please bring a snack/drink to share. Hot dogs and s'mores will be provided. See Eryn or Pandi for more information.

### **Women's Bible Study**

We are currently reading "Horizontal Jesus: How our Relationships with Others Affect our Experiences with God" by Dr. Tony Evans. Reading guides and books are available for \$10. See Eryn Lavery for copies or more details. Bible Study meets Tuesdays 11:00-12:30 p.m. with Pandi Ford providing daycare in the nursery.

### **Transformation Tuesdays**

This year has come to an exciting close! This spring, the children of Transformation Tuesdays presented a drama, "Noah and the Ark", with the expert musical help of the Memorial Handbell Choir. Two showings (Children's Sunday and our Spring Open House) allowed us to reach many people. It was a fun way to learn about the story of Noah and the hope of God's promises to us! Additionally, the Children's Choirs sang at both events. Well done, children!

This event could not have taken place without the help of many dedicated leaders: Eryn Lavery, Jessica Decker, Gail Billig, DeDe Kerr, Pandi Ford, Carol Cauvel, Tanya Zahn, Mary Gaiser, and Susie Shaffer. We are also thankful for the delicious snacks provided each week by Lynne Stover. And, of course, the support of all of the parents and families is invaluable to making this program a success!

I have enjoyed making music with your children, working with them to create dramas and crafts, and learning with them. I look forward to working with them in the fall and seeing how this program blossoms. What a blessing their spirit, energy, and intelligence are to us all at First Presbyterian! – Filippa Duke

### **Men of First Breakfast Bible Study**

The Men of First Breakfast Bible Study will meet during the Month on May on Wednesday mornings at 7 a.m. in Scheide Hall where the men of the church have a Bible Study along with a delicious breakfast, good fellowship, and conversation on a passage of the Bible. This study will conclude on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

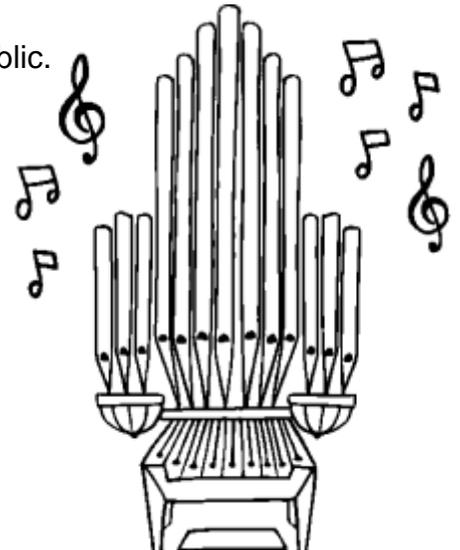
## Music Ministry

### Pie and Pipes May 22, 2016

You are invited to a concert at First Presbyterian on Sunday, May 22, 2016!

The Music and Worship Committee is hosting its first event in the *Arts at First Series*: Pie and Pipes! We will begin the event with a reception of delicious pies at 2:00 p.m. Once we've all eaten our fill, we will have a bit of music while we digest! All are invited to a concert in the Sanctuary at 3:00 p.m. Filippa Duke will give an organ recital, along with two musical guests. Former FPC organist, Steve Winslow, will join her for an organ duet for four hands and four feet! Bass Joe Thompson will also join Filippa for a set of several songs. The concert will include works by J.S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and even Bach's "forgotten" son, P.D. Q. Bach. You won't want to miss the event- or the pies!

The event is free and open to the public.  
Come hungry and leave filled!



### Chancel Choirs

You are invited to add to the ministry of music by joining the Chancel Choir on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Our final rehearsal before the summer will be on June 1, 2016. If you have interest or questions, Dr. Filippa Duke is happy to visit with you.

### Handbell Choir

The Memorial Handbell Choir welcomes new members as we rehearse this spring at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays. Our final rehearsal before the summer will be Tuesday, May 31, 2016

**This Month's Ushers:** Bill Martin. John Frve. Allen Huhes

## Campus Ministries

### College Fellowship Meets Here at the Church

The College Ministry that meets here in our church each Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in Scheide Hall will continue to meet this month and through the summer. With all the young adults coming home from school we will continue this great fellowship of spiritual growth and exploration, that challenges those in the college community, to proclaim Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Students who will continue to meet during the summer from the Titusville area are Matt Baker; Alyssa Drusko; David Newcombe; Katelyn Strusion; Taylor Walters; and McKenna Hanely.

I would also like to say good-bye to the following students until next year; Kassidy Baker, Polk, PA; Kami Beers of Red bank Valley, PA; Kemi Haryomide of Washington, PA, Brandon Haskins, West- Philadelphia, PA; Bailey Low of Philadelphia, PA; Ashley Quadri of Erie, PA; and Zach Rockey of Sunbury, PA.

## Senior Adult Ministry (SAM's Club) Ministry

### SAM's Lunch and a Movie

On May 13, lunch will be served at 12:00 noon in Scheide Hall with a movie to shortly follow in Emerson Parlor. All are welcome to attend.

You can suggest a good movie to watch, make the soup (or the whole meal), or simply just come and eat. All we want is you to join us.

This group will meet again on Friday, May 27, 2016.

## Birthdays

Pete Thompson	1	Linda Steinbuhler	10	Dan Nicols	20
Lori Baker	2	William Frazier	11	Dr. James Wilkens	23
Shaun Zimmerman	4	David Snyder	11	William Gallagher	26
Wyndham (Brud) Jones	6	Robert Buchan	13	Sonny Canady	28
Kathy Brady	7	Richard Roeder	14	Jane Yingling	29
Bruce Peterson	7	Maxine Gollehan	16	Susie Shaffer	29
Carol Cauvel	9	Jane Wilkens	16	Clare Smith	30
Bruce Smith	9	Christy Snyder	19	Janet Gadsby	31

*If we have missed your birthday – please let us know.*

## Flowers

### Chancel Flowers

If you would like to place flowers in the Sanctuary on any Sunday throughout the year, let Terry Davitt know in the church office (827-3665) by the Wednesday prior to them being in the sanctuary. This way she can place the dedication in the bulletin.

## Community

### A Food Pantry

The Food Pantry can use our help. They are in need of most food items and will gladly take donations.

### Boy Scout Troop Meets on Mondays

All boys in grades 1st - 5th interested in joining the cub scouts are invited to come each Monday night at 6 p.m. in the Scheide Hall. Contact Chad Rugh (814) 673-6364 or Steve Coleman (814) 827-3686.

## Contact us:

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## Staff:

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